



Colorado State Conservation Board  
November 11, 2013  
Colorado Springs, CO

**Meeting called to order: 1:10 pm**

**ROLL CALL:**

**Margaret Lenz**, Member-At-Large  
**Larry Sweeney**, Colorado River, Gunnison-Dolores River Watersheds  
**Harold Unwin**, Lower Arkansas River Watershed  
**Karen Salapich**, Upper Arkansas River Watershed  
**Danny Neufeld**, Rio Grande Watershed  
**Mary Sue Liss**, Upper South Platte River Watershed

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:**

**Bud Mekelburg**, Republican, Lower South Platte Watershed  
**Vernon Lerette**, San Juan Basin Watershed  
**Karin Utterback-Normann**, North Platte, White, Yampa Watershed

**OTHER ATTENDEES:**

**Eric Lane**, CDA – Conservation Services Division Director  
**Cindy Lair**, State Conservation Board Program Manager  
**Nicole Reed**, Conservation Specialist  
**Ashley Ross**, Conservation Specialist  
**Jim Currier**, Conservation Specialist  
**Natalie Macsalka**, Conservation Specialist  
**Tammra Straub**, Conservation Specialist  
**Mark Cronquist**, Conservation Specialist

Introductions and Roll Call were completed. **Harold Unwin moved to excuse Vernon Lerette, Bud Mekelburg and Karin Utterback-Normann from the meeting. Mary Sue Liss seconded, all in favor, motion passed.**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Additional agenda items added: Land Mined Reclamation, Conservation of Native Plants and District Good Governance. General consensus approval of agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Harold Unwin** moved to approve minutes, **Karen Salapich** seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

#### **CSCB NOMINATION COMMITTEE:**

**Harold Unwin** discussed the nomination committee's input as leaving the officers as they currently are. **Larry Sweeney as President, Harold Unwin as VP, and Vernon Lerette as Secretary.** The board discussed that technology and email inputs are vital to communication and please remember that. There were no nominations from the floor.

**Mary Sue Liss moved to accept the nomination committees' recommendation. Harold Unwin** seconded. Discussion that technology not be held against any board member that wants to serve. **All in favor, motion carries.**

#### **FINANCIAL REVIEW:**

**Nicole Reed** explained that the final report is complete. There is a booth set up in the expo hall about the findings. Each board member received a final report book and each district will be mailed a hard copy of the final report of findings. Also, during the breakout sessions on Wednesday there will be a session on board supervisor insurance, liability, bonding, etc. in relation to the reviews.

#### **2014 SLATE OF OFFICERS:**

President **Larry Sweeney**, VP **Harold Unwin**, and Secretary **Vernon Lerette. Mary Sue Liss** moved to accept the slate, **Danny Neufeld** seconded. **All in favor, motion carried.**

#### **CSCB ELECTION:**

**Cindy Lair** reviewed the 3 positions that were part of the election. The new Lower South Platte/Republican board member is **Chester Zwirn from Yuma County Conservation District. Representing the Colorado, Gunnison-Dolores again is Larry Sweeney and the Upper South Platte new board member is Joe Lindsay from Deer Trail Conservation District.** Due to the federal government shutdown (and the process of ballots being mailed/collected was hindered) the election was extended until last Friday at noon. The new board members and corresponding districts have not been notified but will be next week.

**Cindy Lair** presented outgoing board member, **Mary Sue Liss**, with a small gift as a token of appreciation.

#### **DISTRICT CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN:**

**Tammra Straub** discussed that the existing NRCS contract goes until March 31, 2014. She is hoping to supply funding until end of fiscal year. **Districts MUST have a DUNS number and register that number with SAMS.gov (any federal funding recipient MUST do this.). Tammra Straub's** deadline for this is Dec.1<sup>st</sup>. January 1<sup>st</sup> payments will be good to go and she is continually following up with districts that do not have this in place.

There are no more contracts for **DCT**, there will be purchase orders with a statement of work and reporting system (districts will not have to sign and send back paperwork; they will just receive the statement of work and be able to start).

#### **MATCHING GRANT:**

**Tammra Straub** all **2013** reports are coming through, do not know if any will underspend except that Middle Park is underspent by about 21%. The new district manager understands the process and their 2014 application improved greatly.

**Matching Grant (2014): Tammra Straub** reviewed the Sept 5<sup>th</sup> approval and provided details on the bottom 4 rankings and revisions. The spreadsheet was discussed and reviewed by the board. **Harold**

**Unwin moved to approve the revised matching grant funding for 2014, Karen Salapich seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Cindy Lair** explained that the DCT program has been the most successful program NRCS has had with a non-Federal partner. As a willing partner, with NRCS employees' contribution, CSCB is open to ideas with expanding the DCT program and other areas. **Cindy Lair** asked the board to see if there are other opportunities for DCTs to assist in the field.

Discussion by the board on if a district can use matching grant funds for a landowner that is in another district. i.e. district A have a tree sales program, district B doesn't have a tree sale program, can district A use funds to help the landowner. **The board discussed the options and have consensus with leaving it as a local decision and as long as the spirit is to put conservation on the ground.**

#### **NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION STRATEGY:**

**Eric Lane** discussed a native plant conservation strategy and reviewed some handouts. In 2009 they published a strategic plan that also has some policy framework. Due to the better budget times in the state, they want to see if the legislature would like to look at policy on native plant strategy. **Eric Lane's** mission is to find out how agricultural stakeholders feel on this proposal and report back to the Commissioner. This is not intended to become regulatory; the goal is incentive- based. **Eric Lane** is asking for perspective from conservation districts. The CSCB raised views of concern that this will become regulatory and issues with federal land managers and unintended consequences of them telling private landowners that they can no longer graze or use their land because they have a rare plant. **Eric Lane** discussed that all stakeholders having the intended statute say "this should not affect the landowner use" or something similar. **Cindy Lair** asked whether the group wants to include it in the upcoming legislative session. **Eric Lane** explained that it could be this year or it could wait another year.

#### **STREAMLINING:**

**Nicole Reed** reviewed the streamlining handout. The entire goal of this project is that ALL conservation districts have one submission location to submit all state documents (CSCB, DORA, and DOLA). Districts are currently submitting budgets, supervisor lists, APW and LRP through this system. It is meant to make it easier for conservation district managers to submit required paperwork.

#### **MINED LAND RECLAMATION BOARD:**

**Larry Sweeney** confirmed the last meeting's board discussion on **Mary Sue Liss** continuing as the CSCB representative. **Mary Sue Liss** submitted a report from the meetings including a reclamation mine example. **Mary Sue Liss** will serve two years. If any board member has any interest in serving after **Mary Sue Liss**, let Larry Sweeney know. (**Nicole Reed** work with **Mary Sue Liss** on notes before each meeting).

#### **DISTRICT GOOD GOVERNANCE:**

**Natalie Macsalka** discussed the concept of a "district in good standing" and provided some information gathered from other states. The "district in good standing" program distributes base funding (direct assistance) to conservation districts in other states. Washington state uses a report card that each board completes, then the area specialist completes the same report card and then they meet and discuss. Funding is based on what districts are able to complete (90% complete, 90% funding and the rest of the \$\$ is used for district grants). Other states perform a ranking like Colorado, which also has a tendency to turn into a competition between districts.

#### **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS:**

**Cindy Lair** gave the background information on the draft in the meeting packets. **Jim Currier** explained the document and the board discussed the impacts of the federal shutdown. **Mary Sue Liss** suggested a

check list for district managers; **Margaret Lenz** suggested having either a hard drive or USB in a bank box; and **Danny Neufeld** brought up the concern for districts that collect rent from NRCS (and the apprehension about default payments, etc.). **Harold Unwin** reminded that this could happen again in January. **Cindy Lair** explained the need for a laptop is greater now than with the QuickBooks issue but there are other options for continuity and peace of mind, such as “cloud storage”.

**Larry Sweeney** requested that this board talk to district managers and ask for input on this document. Start talks with their own districts and branch out. **Cindy Lair clarified the Board’s discussion that specialists would send out this document as a draft to get districts to start the discussion.**

#### **DIRECT ASSISTANCE:**

**Nicole Reed** thanked **Harold Unwin, Karin Utterback-Normann** and the rest of CSCB staff that helped review the current Annual Plan of Work (APW) document, instructions, and review criteria. After much discussion **Danny Neufeld moved to change from 10 review questions to the 8 in the handout for the 2014 Direct Assistance, totaling 40 points. There will be an allowance of up to 2 total bonus points. Margaret Lenz seconded. All in favor, motion passed.**

#### **CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:**

**Nicole Reed** updated that to-date there is one supervisor (and **Natalie Macsalka**) that have successfully completed the certification process. There are approximately 10 that have completed all the tests, but have not passed all of them.

**Ashley Ross** updated the board on district manager training. After some board discussion it was decided that the training material will be handouts, not a PowerPoint. About ½ of the titles are done (as 1-2 pages). The board stated they do not want testing for this. **Ashley Ross will have revisions done by the end of January and it will be done for the public by spring 2014.**

#### **BUDGET:**

**Cindy Lair** reviewed the pie charts and budget, also clarified that direct assistance, DCT, and matching grant are completely separate from our operating budget.

#### **2014 MEETING DATES:**

January – Stock Show joint meeting with CACD  
June 10-11 – Trinidad  
August 27-28 – Wray  
November – Loveland at CACD Annual Meeting

**Meeting adjourned at 4:32pm.**